Claims
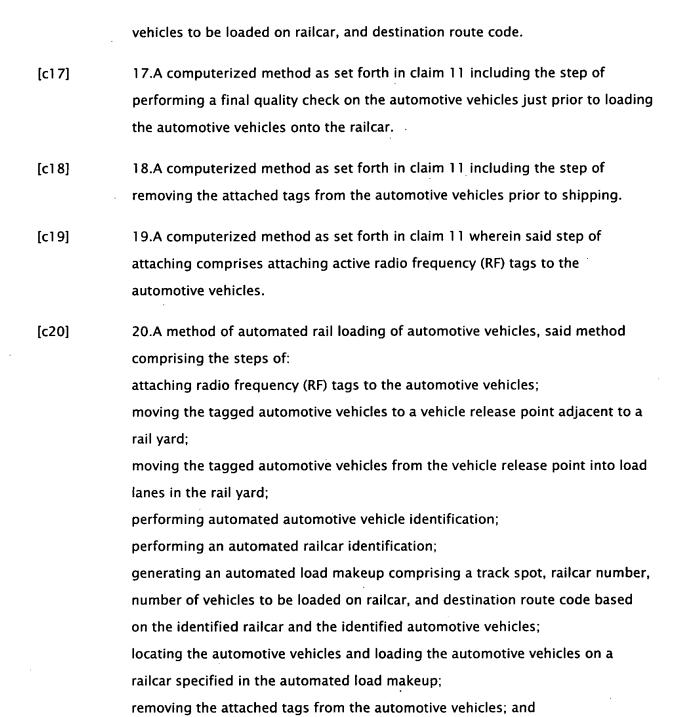
[c1]   1. A method of automated rail loading of automotive vehicles, said method comprising the steps of:

attaching tags to the automotive vehicles;

performing an automated railcar identification; and

generating an automated load makeup based on the identified railcar and the automotive vehicles; and

locating the automotive vehicles and loading the automotive vehicles on a railcar specified in the automated load makeup; and

shipping the automotive vehicles via the railcar to a final destination specified in the automated load makeup.

[c2]   2. A method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said step of performing automated railcar identification comprises scanning an identification number of a railcar.

[c3]   3. A method as set forth in claim 1 including the step of performing automated automotive vehicle identification.

[c4]   4. A method as set forth in claim 3 wherein said step of performing automated vehicle identification comprises electronically reading the tags on the automotive vehicles by RF antennas installed in a rail shipping yard.

[c5]   5. A method as set forth in claim 1 including the step of moving the tagged automotive vehicles to a vehicle release point adjacent to a rail yard.

[c6]   6. A method as set forth in claim 5 including the step of moving the tagged automotive vehicles in the rail yard.

[c7]   7. A method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said automated load makeup comprises a track spot, railcar number, number of automotive vehicles to be loaded on railcar, and destination route code.

[c8]   8. A method as set forth in claim 1 including the step of performing a final quality check on the automotive vehicles just prior to loading the automotive vehicles onto the railcar.

[c9] 9.A method as set forth in claim 1 including the step of removing the attached tags from the automotive vehicles prior to shipping.

[c10] 10.A method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said step of attaching comprises attaching active radio frequency (RF) tags to the automotive vehicles.

[c11] 11.A computerized method of automated rail loading of automotive vehicles, said method comprising the steps of:
attaching tags to the automotive vehicles;
performing automated automotive vehicle identification;
performing an automated railcar identification;
generating an automated load makeup based on the identified railcar and the identified automotive vehicles;
locating the automotive vehicles and loading the automotive vehicles on a railcar specified in the automated load makeup; and
shipping the automotive vehicles via the railcar to a final destination specified in the automated load makeup.

[c12] 12.A computerized method as set forth in claim 11 wherein said step of performing automated railcar identification comprises scanning an identification number of a railcar.

[c13] 13.A computerized method as set forth in claim 11 wherein said step of performing automated vehicle identification comprises electronically reading the tags on the automotive vehicles by RF antennas installed in a rail shipping yard.

[c14] 14.A computerized method as set forth in claim 11 including the step of moving the tagged automotive vehicles to a vehicle release point adjacent to a rail yard.

[c15] 15.A computerized method as set forth in claim 11 including the step of moving the tagged automotive vehicles in the rail yard.

[c16] 16.A computerized method as set forth in claim 11 wherein said automated load makeup comprises a track spot, railcar number, number of automotive

vehicles to be loaded on railcar, and destination route code.

[c17]   17.A computerized method as set forth in claim 11 including the step of performing a final quality check on the automotive vehicles just prior to loading the automotive vehicles onto the railcar.

[c18]   18.A computerized method as set forth in claim 11 including the step of removing the attached tags from the automotive vehicles prior to shipping.

[c19]   19.A computerized method as set forth in claim 11 wherein said step of attaching comprises attaching active radio frequency (RF) tags to the automotive vehicles.

[c20]   20.A method of automated rail loading of automotive vehicles, said method comprising the steps of:

attaching radio frequency (RF) tags to the automotive vehicles;

moving the tagged automotive vehicles to a vehicle release point adjacent to a rail yard;

moving the tagged automotive vehicles from the vehicle release point into load lanes in the rail yard;

performing automated automotive vehicle identification;

performing an automated railcar identification;

generating an automated load makeup comprising a track spot, railcar number, number of vehicles to be loaded on railcar, and destination route code based on the identified railcar and the identified automotive vehicles;

locating the automotive vehicles and loading the automotive vehicles on a railcar specified in the automated load makeup;

removing the attached tags from the automotive vehicles; and

shipping the automotive vehicles via the railcar to a final destination specified in the automated load makeup.